

Message Text

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62

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 151136Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHBC 2897

S E C R E T BEIRUT 2092

EXDIS

NOFORN

DEPT PASS SECDEF (OSD/ISA)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, LE, XF

SUBJECT: CAIRO ARAB LEAGUE DEFENSE COUNCIL MEETING

REF: BEIRUT 1996

1. FURTHER TO CONVERSATION AMBASSADOR HAD WITH FOREIGN MINISTER TAQLA, CHARGE SAW JOSEPH SKAFF MINISTER OF DEFENSE, MORNING FEBRUARY 14 CONCERNING MILITARY ASSISTANCE GRANTED LEBANESE DURING RECENT ARAB LEAGUE DEFENSE MINISTERS' MEETING. SKAFF EXPLAINED THAT MILITARY ASSISTANCE ISSUE WAS APPROACHED FROM TWO TIME FRAMES. THE FIRST WAS TO MEET IMMEDIATE REQUIREMENTS AND THE ASSISTANCE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

2. FOR PURCHASE OF 155 MILIMETER SELF-PROPELLED HOWITZERS FROM EITHER THE U.S. OR FRANCE.

- A) 5 MILLION STERLING FROM SAUDI ARABIA,
- B) 2 MILLION STERLING FROM QATAR,
- C) 1-1/2 MILLION STERLING FROM THE FEDERATION OF ARAB GULF STATES AND
- D) IRAQ AND ALGERIA HAD TO CONSULT THEIR GOVERNMENTS BUT WERE EXPECTED TO MAKE CONTRIBUTIONS

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RAISING THE TOTAL AMOUNT RECEIVED FOR ABOVE PURPOSE

TO 10 MILLION POUNDS STERLING.

(SKAFF INDICATED GOL HAS APPROACHED BOTH U.S. AND FRENCH DEFATT FOR LETTER OF OFFER. EMBASSY DEFATT SENT REQUEST TO DEFENSE FEB. 12, USDAO MSG 119 DTG 121655Z.)

3. IN ADDITION, SAUDI ARABIA WAS TO SUPPLY AMMUNITION (SKAFF WAS NOT CLEAR WHETHER THE AMMUNITION WAS SOOLELY FOR THE 155 MM GUNS OR NOT) AND KUWAIT WAS TO CONTRIBUTE 1-1/2 MILLION POUNDS STERLING FOR PURCHASE OF AMMUNITION.

4. LIBYA WAS TO SUPPLY CONVENTIONAL ANTI-AIRCRAFT AND ANTI-TANK WEAPONS (GUNS NOT MISSILES).

5. ON THE LONG RANGE SIDE, LEBANON ESTIMATED THAT THEIR REQUIREMENTS OVER A PERIOD OF YEARS WOULD BE \$700 MILLION MINIMUM IF THEY WERE TO SUE THEIR OWN RESOURCES FOR A CONTEMPLATED FORCE OF 40,000 SOLDIERS. IF THE ARAB LEAGUE WERE TO HELP FINANCE GOL'S LONG RANGE DEFENSE PLAN, THEN GOL WOULD FULLY MECHANIZE ARMED FORCES WHICH WOULD DOUBLE COST, I.E. \$1.4 BILLION. LEBANON WAS TO SUBMIT A LONG TERM DEFENSE PLAN TO THE ARAB LEAGUE AT A MEETING TO BE HELD IN APPROXIMATELY TWO MONTHS.

6. SKAFF INDICATED THAT ARMY WAS IN DEPSEDATE POSITION AT THE MOMENT AS IT WAS 2,000 MEN UNDER STRENGTH. THE BILL FOR CONSCRIPTION WAS IN PARLIAMENT AND IF IT WERE NOT PASSED WITHIN THE NEXT MONTH, A DECREE WOULD BE ISSUED BY THE PRESIDENT PLACING CONSCRIPTION IN FORCE.

7. SKAFF SAID ABOVE INFORMATION HAD NOT BEEN SHARED WITH LEBANESE PARLIAMENT AND REQUESTED IT BE CLOSELY HELD.
HOUGHTON

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECDEF.

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NNN

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